

Lifework Planning for Middle School Students

The needs of the typical middle school child suggest that career guidance programs must offer them a wide variety of experiences and opportunities so that children at various rates of development can find something that fits their present stage of development and the issues with which they are preoccupied. Such programs must provide opportunities for these children to receive feedback about who they are becoming, the opportunities opening to them, and their relationships with others. They need time and and space to gain new experiences and to contemplate the meaning of these experiences to their lives.

Unless the educational experiences provided students at this level are timely and appropriate to the questions that students are asking themselves, it is unlikely that they will have a significant influence on student behavior or choice making. This is a time, then, when change in the self and the world can be used as a focal point for planning, and when student responsibilities through participation in planning can be related to the consequences of decisions.

Boys and girls both need a language of vocations; an orientation to preferences; and the rudiments of how to differentiate interests and aptitudes and relate them to future educational options and the occupational clusters available.

from *Career Guidance and Counseling through the Lifespan*
by Edwin Herr and Stanley Cramer, HarperCollins, 1996

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Middle School Career Development includes:

- ➔ exploration of the entire range of career pathways
- ➔ self-assessment (interests, values, abilities)
- ➔ awareness of gender role stereotyping
- ➔ accurate labor market information
- ➔ involvement of parents